



"Being back is hard for you." Aliana nearly smacked into the doorframe when Galahad placed his large hands on her tense shoulders.

"You scared me!" she said, placing her hand over her heart.

"I though you would have heard me coming." His warm hands massaged her tight shoulders. "But you seem lost in another world."

Leaning into his touch, she shook her head. "I was just thinking."

Galahad sighed deeply, his hands squeezing her shoulders before turning her to face him. "I understand how you're feeling right now. My parents were murdered when I was young."

Aliana looked into his blue eyes, surprised. "You never told me that."

"Sir Belvoir and his men found us just after it happened. He raised me as his own, trained me to be a knight." His hand rubbed light circles on her back.

"I was just remembering how things used to be," Aliana confessed, hoping that sharing some of her pain would help lessen it.

"Why were you looking through your father's things before you came to London?"

Aliana turned in Galahad's arms, leaning her back against his

chest. She studied the office until she found her voice. “I was in New Orleans working on a photo commission several months ago. I was walking the French Quarter when I came to a fortuneteller’s stand. I took a few pictures, and she called me over. I thought she was going to be upset with me, but she sat me down at her table. ‘You feet mus’ be achin’ after running so hard, *chère,*’ she told me. ‘Folks thinkin’ the’ can run from de past and they ghosts never find peace’.”

Aliana laid her hands over Galahad’s, remembering the feel of the woman’s cracked, dry hand on top of hers and the smell of sweet tea on the woman’s breath. “I tried to ignore her, but she kept insisting that I needed to stop running and face what was haunting me. She said I’d never again know what a real life ‘filled with love, happiness, and adventure’ felt like until I faced my past. It took me another two weeks before I came home.”

Galahad hugged her tighter, his chin resting on her shoulder, silently supporting her. “When you returned home you discovered your adoption.”

Aliana nodded, turning her face toward his. “I guess she was right. I never would have been in London if she hadn’t pushed me to come home. I never would have been in Avalon’s forest, and I never would’ve found you or Dagg or Arthur.”

“Do you regret it?” Galahad asked, a worried kind of seriousness in his eyes.

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